

Legacy

1997

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Most of all, I'd like to thank my God. He's endowed each of us with creativity and given each of us something to share.

I've enjoyed putting together this year's Legacy. I hope you enjoy reading it and come away with something more than just pretty words.

Stephanie Thompson
Legacy Editor 1997

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What Do You See?

I see the mountains before me...
I can see the flowers and trees;
The blue dome above...
But mostly I see the mountains...
I need to learn to smell the flowers,
Climb the trees,
Reach for the sky;
And not just stand in awe of the mountains
As life passes me by
Life is more than just mountains to climb.
It's valleys with hills in between,
Grassy knolls to lie in,
Meadows of wildflowers to run through,
Babbling brooks to cross on stepping stones,
Cascading waterfalls to splash in.
It's moonlit nights for walking,
With stars in the sky,
A rainbow after the storm has passed.
It's the people you meet,
The friendships that grow...
Like sweet scented flowers along life's road.

By Rhonda S. Rossier

Rainy Days

even as the rain falls and the
dark clouds roll in
I think of you...

even as the wind blows and
the air starts to spin
I think of you...

for you are the sunshine
that casts out the rain
you are the remedy
that casts out the pain

you are everything I could ever hope for
even as the sun loses its light
and the stars shine so bright
I think of you...

by John Thomas

Stars

By Abbie Hilton

The girl in the meadow called to the girl under the streetlight.
"Look at the beautiful stars!"

The girl under the streetlight looked up, but she saw only the faintest points of light. "Yes, I see them."

"Do you see the constellations?" asked the girl in the meadow.
"Aren't they marvelous?"

The girl under the streetlight squinted. "They don't make sense to me." She pulled out her star book and tried to identify the constellations, but the more she looked, the more annoyed she felt. At last she threw the book to the ground. "They're too confusing! How can I make sense of something so vague and dim?"

A man walking walking by heard the girl and approached her. "Here," he said confidently, "let me show you the constellations." He proceeded to name several points of light, explaining what the names meant and what the people and animals they represented were supposed to be doing. The girl smiled. Now she understood. The man left, and she gazed happily into the sky. However, as soon as she tried to relocate the stars and remember their names, she became confused. "This is ridiculous!" exclaimed the girl under the streetlight. "What he said only makes sense while he is talking."

"Excuse me," said another man. "Are you trying to view the heavenly bodies?"

"Yes," muttered the girl under the streetlight.

"Let me show you. You see, that star directly above is a red dwarf in the nebula of..." he continued speaking in long words in an important tone. The girl didn't want to look stupid, so she nodded solemnly. However, she didn't really understand anything that the man said, and when he left she felt lost once more.

"This is hopeless!" she cried.

"What is hopeless?" came the voice of the girl in the meadow.

"I will never see the stars," said the girl under the streetlight.
"They're too dim and vague and scientific for me to understand."

"No, they're not," laughed the other girl. "You just have to come out here and look at them. The light pollution from your streetlight is keeping you from seeing the stars. Come away."

An expression of fear crossed the girl's face, and she put one hand protectively around the pole of the streetlight. "Oh, I couldn't do that! I'm afraid of the dark. I can't see without the streetlight!"

"Yes, you can. The stars will be your light."

"But I like *my* light! I don't trust the stars. They look so faint that I couldn't possibly see by them."

That's because the streetlight is blinding you. Can you even see *me*?"

"No," admitted the girl as she clung fiercely to the pole.

"But I can see *you*," said the girl in the meadow, "and I can see all the countryside that you can't see because you're standing under that artificial light. The land is beautiful from here."

"Really?" asked the girl under the streetlight. Her voice grew timid. "You can see that well? Do you think I could see too?"

"Of course. Just come away from the streetlight."

"But I...I'm scared. I'll come another time."

"No, now. Soon dawn will come and you won't be able to see the stars."

"But I'm sleepy, and I can't see, and I don't like the dark and..." In spite of her complaining, the girl in the meadow came into the narrow, blind circle of the streetlight and drew the other girl gently into the soft, resilient night.

The girl from the streetlight clung to her new friend. "You lied! I can't see anything!"

"Patience. Your eyes have to adjust."

"This is boring...and scary. I want to go back."

"Look up."

"Look up at what? All I see is black and...Well, one star. No, I guess several. Wait, I..." The girl from the streetlight staggered backwards and gasped in awe as all the splendor of the heavens burst suddenly into focus.

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

John 1:5, NIV

You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord turns my darkness into light.

2 Samuel 22:29, NIV

Choices

You face a door...
Do you open it?
A cold, clammy hand turns the knob.
(its yours)
Slowly, cautiously you peek inside.
A voice calls harshly,
"Either in or out!"
You plunge in head first,
All uncertainties left behind.
You're the life of the party,
Trying new things,
(or are you?)
Your head starts pounding,
The insecurities are back.
"What am I doing here?"
You bolt out the door,
Escape...
Freedom?
Now where?
The night is so dark you can't see,
You stumble and fall,
In desperation...
A cry for help...
A guiding hand reaches out.

You face a door...
A sigh,
(not again)
A hand on your shoulder,
You're not alone.
A look of encouragement,
Words of assurance. You reach for the door...
And open it.
Warmth and words of welcome greet you.
You want to go in,
But your feet won't move.
"You can't do it alone,"
A soft voice whispers.
"Help me then..."
With a smile on His lips
And compassion in his eyes,
The Lord takes your hand,
And you walk in side.

By Rhonda Rossier

my laughing thief

laughing laughing little man
causing me such grief
breaking through my barriers
stealing like a thief

smiling smiling eyes of green
rob me of my strength
push me closer to the edge
when i'm at the brink

breaking breaking is my heart
taken but not bought
stolen from its pedestal
then dropped without a thought

crying crying blue eyes watch
as you are led away
i find no satisfaction
in knowing that you'll pay

smirking smirking silly boy
you see i bailed you out
you think you're free to run and play
but this i greatly doubt

loving loving precious dear
new chains bind your soul
the debt was paid but with your heart
and i will never grant parole

by Klaralyn Gatz

Like kitten's paws,
no time for pause,
the time is running out.
This world's fate,
as domed by hate,
will soon be brought about.
If she should last,
'twould be a blast,
and that I do not doubt!

The devil waits,
on those he hates,
to bring about despair.
But humble saints,
without his taints,
escape his deathly snare.
No doubt remains,
but that his banes,
will end in all that's fair.

When nought remains,
of earth's last pains,
this world will shine fair.
With surface new,
and hearts kept true,
'twill be in Jesus' care.
My joy will sour,
if in that hour,
I cannot find you there.

By Erik Mundall

W
h
i
m
s
y

The wind in my face
holding me in its tender embrace.

Coaxing back my hair
teasing my face.

Flitting about me
beckoning, calling me
to join its race.

by Stephanie Thompson

Be Still and Know...

Have you ever stopped and listened
To the quiet sounds around?
To the whispers of the treetops
To the laughter of the leaves?
Have you seen them when they glistened
with the raindrops that abound?
Or did sorrows bring you teardrops
Taking these from you like thieves?
Have you stopped and smelled the lillies
Which along your path do grow?
Have you watched the tiny insects
That with vivid colors fly?
Have you stroked the foals and fillies?
Have you seen their playful show?
Or, in search of other prospects,
Did you pass all these right by?
Have you tasted wild cherries?
Or the plums along the way?
Have you looked for hidden secrets
In the mossy forest floor?
Have you found God's nature carries
Hearts like yours aloft, away?
or could you not see the egrets for the trifles that you bore?

By Erik Mundall

Shoes

It rains, and they get
the puddles. It snows,
and they get the cold.
We walk, and they get
worn, beaten, ripped,
and, when they're old,
they get thrown away,
replaced by a new pair.
I wish we didn't have
so much in common.

by Eve Parker

Bound For

We all stand, balanced against
the movement of the train. We
slow down, stop. Doors slide
open, businessmen, families, all
push in, ignoring the appearance
of no space available. Arms cross
in front of my face, over my head,
behind my back. The air is too
warm, colognes mix, and swirl
in my head. **I want out!** The doors
close. We all stand, closer now,
balanced, and bound.

by Eve Parker

Another Machine Dies

Six foot flat
beep
on a bed,
beep
struggling heart
beep
almost dead.

beep
Lines of life

beep
cross a screen—

beep
death to man

or machine?

by Jim Lounsbury

The Master

By Stephanie Thompson

There was once a student, studying with a great artist. The student wanted to be a great painter, just like his master. He spent hours studying the master's works. He watched the master paint. He observed the master's every move.

One day, in the studio, the master told him, "Look out the window. See that scene? I want you to paint that."

"Yes, sir!" the student responded excitedly. He got out his paints, brushes, the easel, and all his other equipment.

"One thing," the master cautioned, "when you start putting in the details, be sure to balance your hand like I taught you the other day."

The student, excited over his assignment, hurriedly nodded and continued collecting his supplies.

He spent the next several weeks carefully working over his canvas. Finally he looked at the picture. "Nearly done. Just the details are left." He started to reach for the stick he should balance his hand on, but changed his mind. "I hate working with that thing. It just gets in my way and slows me down."

He went back to his work and started putting in the details, the little finishing touches that would complete the painting. He continued working for hours, until his work was nearly complete. Then...his hand slipped. He stood there looking in shock. Then he left.

He couldn't go back to that studio. The master had trained, and taught and worked with him so much. He had spoiled all that teaching. There went his hope of being like the master.

He walked and walked and walked until it was late into the night. Then he slept.

In the morning, he woke and decided to creep back to the

studio for his few things. He tip-toed back into the studio. Gathering his things and stuffing them into a bag, he turned to take one last look at his spoiled painting. Then he stopped and looked again.

The paint was still there, but it looked completely different. What had been a mistake yesterday was now a part of a beautiful ray of light shining between the trees. The whole painting had been transformed from an ordinary picture of some trees to a enchanting picture of sun playing among the leaves.

He heard a sound and turned. The master, brush still in hand stood there looking at him with a wonderfully tender expression. "My boy, why did you leave?"

"Because I didn't listen to you master, and I spoiled the painting and all these years of work."

The master laughed. "Am I such an incapable Master Painter as that? Do you think that a streak of paint is the end of your life as a painter? You can't spoil that painting. Especially as long as you come to me with your mistakes. It isn't spoiled. Only different. And different doesn't mean second best."

Ground Level Eagle

You used to fly.
You had clouds and the wind
for your boundaries.
You saw details from heights
I can only imagine
and looked down at
many like me,
victims of earth and gravity.
Till one day an envious
shot stole your glory,
made you a victim too.
Now you have a new
world, marked by the width
of your perch and the
length of your chain.
You still carry yourself
regally, never forgetting
you once ruled the sky.
But your majesty is only more sad, because
You used to fly.

by Eve Parker

Love, the selfless gift of happiness

In love you lose self.

The only I is a gift for you.

It's giving of yourself
to gain love for oneself.

It's the outward emotion
that warms the inward.

Give—receive.

Deny.....and be fulfilled.

by Jessica Berry

The Moon's Vigil

The silvery glow
of a moonrise
filters through my window.
I reach for it,
it runs through my fingers
like water.

Liquid moon-shine
can't be contained.
It goes through and around me
as if I wasn't even there.
No matter what I do,
it can't be stopped.
Even when my world
falls apart,
it keeps its vigil.

by Rhonda S. Rossier

Silent City Night

The street is bare
empty and free of life

Silent City Night

A man adjusts his
cardboard box

A young woman
waits by the phone

Silent City Night

The police patrol
one last time

A man turns off his
neon lights

Silent City Night

No Christmas exits
because of hatred for
the life they live

Silent City Night

The line is long for
the Christmas feast
consisting of our leftovers

Silent City Night

A girl waits at the corner
hoping to get enough so
she can eat

Silent City Night

And here the curtain
is pulled away to the
real Christmas Eve

Silent City Night

by Jessica Berry

Black Coffee

I sip black coffee
and wonder
what a black woman would feel like
to these pale hands,
and wonder
if our children
(coffee and cream)
would need sugar
in a world so bitter.

by Jim Lounsbury

Claws

twin fins
two small sharks
hunting
at the edge of the bed
circling my toes
oblivious prey
in socks.
Radar
the fur-covered fins
twitch atop a
fuzzy head
eyes narrow
whiskers perked
small huntress
big ocean
(toes are tuna)

by Cheri Priest

Estate Sale

They stand in line,
waiting for the doors to open.
Polite vultures, patient. The
victim is already dead.
The pieces of his life are inside,
everything marked and tagged.
All to be had for a price.
And the birds wait,
chatting happily, and hoping
they'll get the choicest piece.

by Eve Parker

True Colors

Autumn colors...
Deepening before they fall
Yellow, brown, crimson, red
Descending one, descending all,
Torn from life, now left as dead
And disconnected from the Vine,
Parted from the blood, the Life,
Without the Spirit's sap divine,
They wither, as if cut by knife.
No two-edged Sword has cut them down.
The Tree did not push them away.
But with no desire for the crown
They have abscised, not to stay.

By Erik Mundall

John

He heard it too, the voice disembodied
reverberating through
a baptism
defining “epiphany”
crowning a king with feathers
or so they sing
of birds
and wild light spirits
(you’ll know it when you hear it
when it once again
falls
descends—to people like you
to people who do need a brighter view
than what men offer here)

And the two wet men in a river
could not even feel the first shivering waves
or the breeze in their daze.
It’s not every day a man is announced
as God.
Reborn in a river
he was the well
he knew the nails
one for each year of witness
and his cousin, in answer
had a heart
so fine
(is yours so fine?)
and a head
so pure
(is yours so pure?)
that a king used it
instead
as payment for
a dancer.

by Cherie Priest

People
Friend
Enemy
Foe
Buddy
Words
j
u
s
t
words
they can
be no more
nor less
than we
C
H
O
O
S
E

By Stephanie Thompson

Standing in a lifeboat sitting on the shore

Let me
perch on your
brow and bail away
the seas
with little buckets.

Stop rocking.

look at me

I am
not shore,
not sand,
not trees.

Stop swaying.
the waves will turn
us both

(and)

some of these
will wash us over

Hold still.

I have these
little buckets
ready, always
trying to bail
the salty
the warm
the living
the endless
(your) seas.

by Cheri Priest

Once Upon a Breeze

As I am here—I will not be long
for the winds that come are very strong.
Once they were warm, gentle, and sweet.

They flourished over me
in a wonderful time long and yet brief.

They change like this every year.
Nourishment they offer at first
but now I feel death is near.

They gave me food, and now I thirst.
But is this now my end
and my stay here now made brief?
Do not worry my friend.

Only think of me as you see others fly by.
Those that may skitter past.
And some that fall majestically from the sky.
My spot will only be stolen as by another thief.
For time is nigh, and I am but a leaf.

by Mike Fraser

Trains

Railroad tracks look quiet under snow
and so do you, though that is not the case.
There is a sense of—I don't know,
some chilly otherworldly place.

Stepswide
side by
side on
widewood

Let's leave footprints where we can,
I know they won't stay long tonight
unless we choose to stop and stand
and let snow cover us with white
and let us freeze on to these tracks
and let ice stick on to our backs

foot prints
stay when
we stay
in them

We can
stop time
any time

by Cherie Priest

Monumental Dreams

By Stephanie Thompson

A towering silhouette, etched against the sky, massive stone bulwarks, gleaming metal; a skyscraper tall enough to reach the clouds; this was his dream.

So he set to work; he planned this masterpiece. Late into the evening hours his lamp burned. It must be just right, thought he.

The plans finished, he commenced construction. Issuing orders like a general, he cared for every small detail. Nothing could be wrong. Replace that section; be careful there; yes that's right.

Long and hard he worked, until his masterpice was finished, finished at last. He stood back and admired it. What gleaming windows, and that massive stone: yes, it was perfect.

While in another building, not so far away, small blocks were being moved and arranged into the plans of another builder's dream.

Again and again the blocks and small stones were moved; it just wasn't right. Standing, he stretched, than paced back and forth, back and forth. Then he stopped. A thought formed in his mind; a thought of the other builder not far away; of his dreams and his skyscraper. Back to his small blocks and stones he went. Quickly taking shape, a building was born. It was small, really just a model, but it was the birth of this builder's dream. Carefully he placed his miniature in a box. Then he went to the other builder who had just put the finishing touches on his masterpiece.

As he walked in the door carrying his box, a boy ran to him.

"Dad, Dad, come look! I made a building!" The boy took his hand and nearly dragged him to the corner. There in quiet splendor reposed a magnificent skyscraper in all the colors of Lego blocks.

"You finished it?" the man asked.

"Yes, Dad!" Then the boy noticed the box. "Whatcha got in the box, Dad?"

“A model for my next building. Want to see it?”

“Sure, Dad.”

The man and the boy opened the box to reveal a small stone and metal building about half the size of the boy’s skyscraper.

“Dad, that looks just like my building!”

“Yes, do you mind?”

“No. What’s it going to be?”

“A children’s hospital.”

“Oh. Can I be an arche...arche... Can I be a builder like you, Dad?”

Again

you tell me you are wounded
and in a perturbed voice you say
I can't understand

But I can

you say you're unpopular
and no one will give you the time of day

I know how you feel

you cry out that even your best intentions
are turned around
when you reach out to help,
you're blamed for the hurt

Tell me about it

you say a friend let you down
one close to you
one you trusted

Mine did too

I know your pain too deep
I know it hurts to think about it
please let me help
you think I can't relate
you think I can't understand

I can

because every time you refuse Me
every time you say "Get out of my life"
you open up the wounds
and I feel the whole thing
again

by Lonnie Wibberding, Jr.

Always Alone

Listen to the silence
of your soul. Watch
the crowds go by, some
rushing, some talking,
and none stopping.
Feel the rush of air
as they pass,
but that's all that
touches you. And
know that if you
were on a mountain,
watching clouds pass
and feeling the wind
brush you, you would
be no different.

by Eve Parker

just a word
a thought
a dream
a rhyme

a poem
is a picture
of
TIME

by Stephanie Thompson

Forgive me, Lord, that I'm so busy
I need to slow my pace a bit
My classes all but make me dizzy
With all the homework that needs writ
I have accomplished mostly all
But still I toil at what remains
And next week's tests will surely call
For strength and energy that wanes
Somehow I know that You are near
You ask me to be still and know
That You are God, I need not fear
For You will shelter me below
Your wings provide a resting place
Where I can hide amid the gale
And thanks to Your unchanging grace
I know Your mercies never fail.

by Erik Mundall

Answer

You yearn for an answer
that never seems to come
an answer to guide the way
show the road, or at least
open a gate.
You wait,
and wait.
It's getting late.

You're still yearning for an answer
that never seems to come
only because you forgot one simple task,
you forgot to ask.

by Stephanie Thompson

Life

Day follows night follows day
Orange sunsets beckon purple horizons of shimmering stars.
The moon, the planets, rising and settling mist.
Where does it come from? Where does it go?

Lapping waves wash flaky sand patterns away.
Lush leaves on the forest trees patter secrets,
While indignant sea-gulls float in close attendance with the wind.

Peaceful mental pictures in an out-of-control planet
something is happening...but who really cares...
Drink in the effervescence of Life.

by Nathan Tidwell

silence
all around
emptiness
no sound
in quietness
all is found

by Stephanie Thompson

In The Journey of Time

In the journey of time there was a man
In the light of space there was a man
He dwelling in that which was created
by him, for him, for his purpose
He, basking in the light of the stars
the light they sent out before they were created
In Him was light
He lighted man and every other thing that has light

All his was light until another brought darkness
All his was bright
until another conceived a shadow
He created another, but not darkness
Darkness was born from another
and another was cast out

In the realm of things created by light
lived a man and a woman
They lived in a sphere of happiness
that promised never to be broken
But they were untrue to happiness
and looked after darkness
In it they could not see,
as one cannot see without light

And darkness came and said it was light
But they could not see
and supposing it to be true
they walked in darkness

And so they walked
and walking in darkness could not see
The light blinded them and hurt their eyes

In the journey of time there was a man
In the light of space there was a man
This man was light
And he saw that which light had created
walking in darkness
And He said "I will go down and walk in darkness
and it won't be darkness anymore."

So the light walked in darkness
so there would be no darkness

But those who had been created by light
didn't want the light
they were darkness and did not want to be revealed
They plotted and planned
one day the light was extinguished by darkness
Darkness celebrated and danced
and partied all over the world

But then every noise was hushed
and Light recreated itself
and shines on forever!

In the journey of time there was a man
-- And He is the Light of the world.

by Lonnie Wibberding Jr.

The Nature of Christmas

As children we often believed
our Christmas rested in boxes under a tree.
But as we grew up
we began to see the true nature of many things.

As adolescents we often were confused for
our love of Santa and Rudolph had been abused.
But as we grew up
we began to see the true nature of our delinquency.

As adults we often were content
our past left good memories in our heads.
But as we grew up
we began to see the true nature of how we would lead.

As parents we often were amazed at
our children and their heavenly expressions.
But as we grew up
we began to see the true nature of love.

As sinners we often are shamed by
the deeds that we have done.
But as we grow up
we begin to see the true nature of the Holy One.

As God's chosen we often are unaware
our Father saved us through his precious heir.
But as we grow up
we begin to see the present God placed for us under the tree.

by Brett Price

Time is life
the essence of being
time is matter
life is being lived
time is emotion
felt and thought and dreamed
time is given
to be spent whether invested or squandered
time is a measure
of each individual life
time is a unit
given with equality, not in amount
but in usability.

We can use each unit
to as full a capacity as the next person
or we can waste the few
or many units we are allotted.

by Stephanie Thompson

The Mime

He walks down the street,
pounding on an invisible box
that only he believes in.
His face is painted, but his
eyes are real. He calls for help
to find a door, a window,
any way out, but no one can hear.
Though his mouth moves, the box
stops all sound from escaping.
And only he can decide when
the box will disappear.

by Eve Parker

There is Somebody Under the Water

by Jeremy Tyrrell

“There is somebody under the water!” shouted Kohkoi as he came running down the narrow causeway constructed from dead gray coral. For a Micronesian with deep-tanned skin, he looked a bit pale.

A short white boat with two men pulled up to a shrubless spot on the opposite side of the causeway. The younger one, clothed in white, sat crouched at the back of the boat next to the engine, his hand covering his mouth. I could see that his eyes failed to blink. The older man in his white hat, yellow shirt, and brown pants tumbled to the land.

Miller, in his camouflaged U.S. Army fatigue shirt, sun-bleached blue slacks, red and blue Florida Panthers cap, and bare feet, leaped into the cloudy blue-green water, leaving his twenty-four-foot fishing boat behind. The two men met in the middle of the causeway.

“Where?” I roared out as I sprang from the water to Kohkoi’s side. The shocked look on his face was louder than his turquoise and orange shirt that clashed with his black, gray and red pants.

He pointed off to the left of the causeway where the line of light green patchy brush broke, “Down there.”

“Show me!” Adrenaline and blood were pounding through my veins as we sprinted barefoot across the coral path that at any other time would have caused my feet to ache. The only thing I could think of was giving CPR.

“Right there. That dark spot in the water. See it?” The energy in his voice could be felt.

I stumbled into the water, but was prevented from diving in by the huge chunks of coral in front of me. Standing helplessly in foot-deep water, I saw Miller come into view. He was standing in the front of the small white boat, looking down into the water. The older man steered them towards the body that floated about thirty feet from the shore. The younger man was crouched so low that all that I could see was his dark hair.

Time slowed with the boat that crept between us and the body. Miller stooped over the edge as we waited for him to pull someone up. Gradually, the boat turned toward us. Miller was still bent over the side.

As they came closer, I could see the black hair that he clutched, towing the body in.

“Get the head out of the water!” I shouted. But, it was as if my words went unheard. A shirtless back and arms came into view. The skin looked much darker under water.

The coral shifted beneath my feet as I stooped down to grab hold of the body that was now in reach. As quickly as I grabbed hold of the back of his pants to pull him out of the water, I released. The feel of the gray, clammy stiffened skin startled me. I then knew that there was nothing that I could do.

Crystal Coasts

Crowning waves come clashing
shaping sand strewn shore
The speckled spray splashing
Making mist and more

With wild wet waterspouts
As angry arrows aimed
Drowning, drowning doubts
Sand's number now is named

Pushing high proud portions
Against the girded ground
Tons of true contortions
Around the Puget Sound

Jumping, jostling, jaded
And so the story goes
Waves faltering, found faded
Their throwing in the throes

And calm and quiet, quelling
The bathing breezes blow
Switching soon the swelling
To lulling lapping low

And then again as when
At first the foaming froths
Hurling, heaving then
Dashing dizziedly the drops

God gave us great glimmers
of His harbor haven
In the shining shimmers
Like crystal coasts quite craven.

By Erik Mundall

My Sin

My sin—
Crucified my Brother
Destroys my mental faculties,
my flesh, my body, my soul
Cherished, possesses me
taking away my Christianity
Uses
Wastes—
Wastes time to know God better,
to reflect Him to others,
to live and love and learn
Retrogresses me
back to what I used to be
The neural paths are stronger than before
The scars deface me all the more
My habits change, and I become the bore:
I hurt
I tear
Claiming Christ's sanction,
Yet infecting others from my rotten core.

Then it is I see that Jesus sees
My distorted figure formed
He stretches out His hand and frees
And I become transformed.

by Jeannette Gibson

Soliloquy

Frolicking through the forest
dripping off the leaves
bouncing around the tree trunks
trickling like a stream
is the melody of a quiet forest.

The crunching of brown leaves
the rustle of vines
the whisper of violets
and the hum of bees
is harmony in a quiet forest.

The cheery whistle of a cardinal
or the chatter of a squirrel
the breath of breezes
and the noise of many little creatures
is a symphony in silence.

by Stephanie Thompson

Beauty

by Naomi Thompson

That is the first thing you think of when you see her. She is beautiful. Long, golden brown hair cascading down her back. Interminable eyelashes framing sparkling green eyes. A rosy mouth made to smile. Straight white teeth. Yes, she is beautiful. Her beauty is intriguing. Her beauty is shining. She is delicate. She is dainty. She is loved by everyone.

Radiant.

The one word that perfectly describes her personality. She is one of the most sincere people you will ever meet. When her mouth smiles, her eyes smile and pull you into her loving personality. You can't help but love her. She is kind to everyone and everything. She loves everyone. She helps poor animals that have been deserted by their owners on the side of the road. She feeds the ducks and birds in the park. She plays with the children, pushing them on the swings and screaming playfully during a game of hide-and-seek. Everyone loves and admires her. No one can think of a time she ever wronged anyone. No one can think of an unkind word to say to or about her. Yes, she is radiant. She is delicate. She is dainty. She is loved by everyone.

At school, she is popular. She has all the boys panting after her, but she dates only the best. She knows that she deserves the best. She gets excellent grades and all of the teachers love her. She wears only the newest fashions, but she doesn't look down on others that do not have it as good as her. She loves everyone, even the less fortunate than her. She is in the Drama club at school and she has voice lessons every week. Her voice is that of an angel. When she sings, old ladies look at her radiant beauty and hear her angelic voice and they cry. She has it all together. She is delicate. She is dainty. She is loved by everyone.

But ignore beauty. Ignore radiance. Ignore it all. Look on the inside. It is all a front, a lie.

Conniving.

That is her spirit. She does all the nice, good things to make people love her. She does not love herself. She hates herself. That is why she must put up this front. She must make everyone love her, or she will wither up and die. But ssshhh...you cannot tell. If anyone should find out how her REAL spirit is, they would surely hate her. She must go on living this lie. She is conniving. She is delicate. She is dainty. She is loved by everyone.

Selfish.

The one word to describe her heart. She thinks not of others, but of herself. You can be telling her your deepest secret and she will seem to listen and sympathize, even cry with you. But she is not listening to your problem. She is patting herself on the back for being such a good "friend." She does not care about your silly problem, she is thinking only of herself. She secretly congratulates herself for being such a good person; so honest, so loved. She only does the good things so that people will look at her and think, "My, she's a nice girl!" And they do. They do not see her heart. They do not hear her thoughts. They do not know this girl. She is selfish. She is dainty. She is loved by everyone.

"Who is this girl?" you ask.

She is me. She is you. She is all of us.

Do You See Me?

What do you see in me?
besides ink on my fingers
and paint on my nose?

What do you see in me
down deep inside
way back behind my eyes?

Do you see the dreams
dancing in my head
the hopes singing in my heart?

Do you see the plans
the aspirations
or the fears and cold dread?

Do you see
humanity in me
yet a spark reflecting divinity?

Do you see in me
the striving of a human soul
the need of a human heart?

Do you see any of me
even just a little part?

by Stephanie Thompson

Creation

How beautiful now,
the coast of the sea,
the forest is green,
with some different trees.

I stay, in my thoughts
on the coast of the sea,
I think - It's a beautiful vision for me.

God - the great creator
of our world -
He loves us,
He gives us His beautiful world.

He gave us His Son
who died on this earth,
and now I live
in beautiful peace.

By Liuba Litvinkova

Narva, Estonia

The beautiful town-
The town of dreams...
The beautiful town
with fantastic wings.

It's history old,
And legends retold.
They live in my world
They are parts of me.

The tales about the witch in the sky
The beautiful lady and her handsome knight.
The tales about our life,
And beautiful town - That is covered with night.

By Liuba Litvinkova

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